



United States Department of Agriculture
Research, Education and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

April 8, 2010

SUBJECT: ARS Research Associate Program - Class of 2011

TO: Center Directors/Laboratory Directors
Research Leaders

FROM: W.H. Blackburn, Area Director /s/

The Administrator has issued the call for proposals for Headquarters-funded ARS Research Associates for the Class of 2011. This year, as in FY 2010, proposals for Research Associates will be funded for 2 full years at \$50,000 per year. There will be 50 awards Agencywide. The proposal selected for the T.W. Edminster Research Associate Award will receive \$60,000 per year for 2 years.

Proposals are to be submitted by a single ARS permanent scientist (Category 1 or 4), who will serve as the mentor and supervisor of the Research Associate. Proposals with a Category 2 scientist as the supervisor will not be considered. Also be advised that the award of a Headquarters-funded Research Associate is given to the individual scientist that prepared the proposal; therefore, it is not transferable. Should the mentor leave the Agency or retire before the position is filled, the Headquarters funds are not provided.

The proposal should outline research that can be accomplished in 2 years and is directly relevant to the base research project under which it is submitted. Proposals that identify specific achievable objectives will receive more favorable consideration than those that simply speed progress toward the overall long-term objectives of the base project. The proposals can only be submitted under the National Program that the research project directly reports to. They cannot be submitted under the "contributing (C)" National Programs.

The submitted proposal will be evaluated independently by the Area Director and the National Program Leadership Team for the National Program. Criteria for evaluation will include scientific excellence, relevance to National Program objectives, and capacity to perform and manage the proposed work. The two scores will be combined to determine which proposals are funded.

One proposal submitted to Headquarters will be selected as the single best proposal overall, which will be designated as the T.W. Edminster Research Associate. The funded proposals and the T.W. Edminster winner will be announced at the Administrator's Council meeting in September 2010.



The schedule for the FY 2011 program is:

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| May 31-July 2, 2010 | Proposals electronically submitted by scientists to the Area Director via ARIS. |
| July 16, 2010 | Area Directors complete initial screening and electronically forward proposals to National Program Staff via ARIS. <i>No more than 20 proposals should be submitted by each Area.</i> |
| July 19-August 13, 2010 | Area Directors and National Program Leaders complete rankings. All rankings should be in by close of business August 13, 2010. |
| September 3, 2010 | Proposals to receive funding are submitted to the Administrator. |
| September 2010 | Selected proposals for funding announced at Administrator's Council meeting. |

Please see the enclosed tips for preparing post-doc proposals.

Dr. Michael McGuire will be coordinating the program. Please forward any questions to him for clarification. If you have questions on the ARIS system, please contact Ms. Reagan Heese.

Enclosure

cc:
AOs/Secretaries
Michael McGuire
Reagan Heese

Tips to Prepare Post-doc Proposals

- All post-doc proposals must be entered into ARIS by **COB Friday July 2, 2010**. Late entries will not be accepted.
- The ARIS Online Manual is available at: <http://www.npstaff.ars.usda.gov/ARIS/Manual/> . Chapter 15.G “Post-Doc Application” provides information about submitting post-doc proposals.
- To find examples of proposals that have been funded in the past, search the ARIS Post Doctoral System. Within the system, click on Active, select Post Doctoral Proposals Approved and then enter the NP code for the appropriate National Program.
- Each ARS scientist (Category 1 and 4) may submit only one post-doc proposal to the Area Office.
- Each Area Office may submit only 20 post-doc proposals to the Office of National Programs (ONP).
- Funding will be awarded to only 50 post-doc proposals.
- Proposals may be submitted only under the National Program that the research project reports to, not a “contributing” National Program.
- Prepare and spell check the proposal in Word and then copy and paste it into ARIS.
- Proposals must be 4,000 characters (approximately 54 lines) or less. (To check this in Word, click Tools, then Word Count to ensure the total number of characters displayed in Statistics is 4,000 or less.)
- The text should include these headings (ALL CAPS) with the narrative below the headings.
 - RESEARCH PROBLEM
 - NATIONAL PROGRAM
 - OBJECTIVE
 - APPROACH AND GOAL
 - EXPECTED RESULTS
 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION